

# eros policy brief on cannabis retail

Prepared by Jarryd Bartle

*The Eros Association is Australia's industry association for adult goods and services. The following policy brief outlines Eros' position on recreational cannabis and suggests a clear set of principles for the legalisation of cannabis retail in Australia.*

## Why Legalise Recreational Cannabis?

There is a global trend toward the decriminalisation and legalisation of recreational cannabis.

Canada and New Zealand currently have proposals for legalisation, joining many parts of the United States and Uruguay in providing for a legal recreational cannabis market.

Eros supports cannabis legalisation in Australia for the following reasons:

- Over a third of Australian adults have consumed illicit cannabis at least once in their lifetime<sup>1</sup>. This number has remained steady for decades.
- The current illicit cannabis market is a major revenue source for organised crime. Organised crime currently costs the Australian public \$36 billion dollars a year.<sup>2</sup> Legalisation would essentially collapse this flourishing black market.
- Legalising cannabis allows for better controls to ensure product safety and to ensure cannabis is not consumed by young people.
- Cost/benefit analysis has put the social and economic benefit of cannabis legalisation at \$727.5 million, largely due to increases in revenue from taxation.<sup>3</sup>

## Eros Principles for Cannabis Retail

Many models for cannabis retail have been tried globally including the pharmacy model in Uruguay, dispensary model in the United States and coffee shop model in the Netherlands.<sup>4</sup>

Legalisation of recreational cannabis overseas has effectively restricted supply to adults and has not increased rates of dependency or addiction.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, some issues of consumer safety have arisen – particularly around cannabis 'edibles'.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2016: Detailed Findings

<sup>2</sup>The Costs of Organised Crime in Australia 2013-2014 Australian Crime Commission

<sup>3</sup>Shanahan, M and Ritter, 'A Cost Benefit Analysis of Two Policy Options for Cannabis: Status Quo and Legalisation' (2014) PLOS One Journal <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0095569>

<sup>4</sup>European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 'Models for the Legal Supply of Cannabis: Recent Developments' May 2016 <<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/pods/legal-supply-of-cannabis>>

<sup>5</sup>Dills, A, Goffard, S and Miron, J 'Dose of Reality: The Effect of State Marijuana Legalizations' Cato Institute, Policy Analysis No. 799

<sup>6</sup>Barrus, D., Capogrossi, K., Cates, S., Gourdet, C., Peiper, N., Novak, S., ... Wiley, J. (2016). Tasty THC: Promises and challenges of cannabis edibles. (RTI Press Publication No. OP-0035-1611). Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI Press. DOI: 10.3768/rtipress.2016.op.0035.1611

# eros policy brief on cannabis retail

Eros has analysed the strengths and limitations of various cannabis retail models overseas and believes that the following principles should guide legislation in Australia:

- Cannabis retail should be formally legalised and not merely 'tolerated' at a municipal level as is the case in the Netherlands.
- Cannabis retail should occur within an age-restricted environment with clear store policies in place to counter access by young people.
- Cannabis retail should remain separate and distinct from tobacco retail and liquor retail.
- Cannabis retailers should be formally trained in cannabis and its effects.
- Cannabis 'edibles' should only be legalised in Australia if there are clear policies on adult-oriented packaging to ensure product is not unintentionally consumed by children.

## Concluding Remarks

The adult retail sector is well placed to provide guidance to cannabis retail in Australia.

Providers of adult goods and services are 'age-restriction specialists' with a breadth of knowledge regarding regulated products.

The Eros Association will continue to provide advice to lawmakers to ensure cannabis legalisation occurs in a manner which is mindful of community concerns and prioritises consumer health and safety.

## Eros Principles for Cannabis Retail

Formal Legislation



Age Restricted Environment



Specialist Staff Training



Separation from Tobacco Sales



Separation from Liquor Sales



Clear Packaging Guidelines for Edibles